

**WHCOA Topic Area: Marketplace**  
**Issue: Senior Mobility/Transportation Services**

**Overview of Current Issue Status:** A survey of transportation provided by the Aging Network showed that 38% of respondents rely on Older Americans Act transportation services for all or nearly all their local transportation, and an additional 25% rely on these services for at least half of their transportation. The Maryland Senior Rides Program has been lauded as a model for the nation.

**Challenges:** Less than half of households in urban and suburban areas are within a half-mile of a public transportation stop, and only one in eight households in rural areas are within a half-mile of public transportation. Transportation problems are closely correlated with self-care problems, isolation and loneliness, and reduced mobility places an older person at higher risk of poor health. The growing ranks of older drivers in the decades ahead will pose challenges for older adults, their caregivers, aging service providers and communities at large. Greater efforts are needed to assist older drivers and aging boomers to remain on the road for as long as safely possible and to provide safe, reliable and convenient means of transportation for those for whom driving is no longer an option.

**Resolution:**

Include statutory language in the Older Americans Act that increases support to the Aging Network to promote senior mobility, expand cost-effective options, and facilitate coordination of human services transportation.

Enhance, coordinate and adequately fund the vast array of federal, state, and local financed transportation services to provide viable and affordable options for the growing population of older adults who need services.

Examine and expand existing public transit systems to improve accessibility and availability to older adults in urban, suburban and rural communities where fixed route services are less accessible.

Support increased funding and flexibility for the Federal Transit Agency's *Section 5310* program, to include operational costs, which funds transportation programs for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Advance the provision of non-emergency medical transportation as an allowable expense under Medicare.

Promote an expanded continuum of mobility options that ensure a pedestrian and transit user-friendly environment, and develop corresponding standards that can be easily implemented into local building and zoning regulations.

Expand the capacity of local Aging Network older driver safety programs, which include referral, assessment, rehabilitative, and regulatory programs, to adequately reach and educate older drivers and their families across the nation.

Expand volunteer ride programs like Maryland Senior Rides and other volunteer-based transportation initiatives, including measures to address liability concerns for these systems.